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"HOW MYBOY WENT DOWN."

It was not on the field of battle,
It was not with a ship at sea,
But a fate far worse than either,
That stole him away from me.
'Twas the death in the ruby wine cup,
That the reason and senses drown;
He drank the alluring poison,
And thus my boy went down—

Down from the heights of manhood
To the depths of disgrace and sin;
Down to a worthless being,
From the hope of what might have been.
For the brand of the beast besotted
He bartered his manhood's crown;
Through the gate of a sinful pleasure
My poor weak boy went down.

A GIRL'S REWARD.

BY CLARA M. HOWARD.

The July sun was pouring its hotest rays upon the earth; the tender plants drooped, and withered in the fierce heat; the unwinking sunflowers, in the gardens, hung their bold heads under the scorching kisses of Old Sol.

No breeze stirred the leaves of the tall elms at the gate; the birds from singing their matin songs, sought rest amid the thick foliage of the orchard, silent save for a flutter of wings, as they flitted from bough to bough.

The cattle lay in the cool meadow grass, lazily chewing their cud; the bees droned a sleepy tune from the clover field across the road; all nature seemed to be half asleep this sultry morning.

The only sign of life about the old farm house, was a solitary figure flitting about the garden. The figure was that of Nettie Senerson, in a big sunbonnet, gathering vegetables for dinner.

Her basket filled, she left the garden, and came up the path, flushed and breathless. Throwing herself down upon the steps she removed the sunbonnet, fanning herself with it vigorously for a few moments.

The kitchen clock chimed the hour of 10, rousing Nettie from her reverie. "Why, how late it is! Mother will return before dinner is ready if I do not hurry!"

Throwing aside her improvised fan, she made an energetic attack upon the contents of the basket, humming a tune the while.

Unconsciously Nettie is making a picture of herself, to which the vines with their drooping blue and white bells, form an appropriate setting. The sunlight glinting through the leaves, lights up her curly golden hair. Her cheeks are flushed with exercise and her blue eyes are glowing with a happy light.

A bright-eyed robin is perched near her, holding a worm in its mouth, uncertain whether to venture nearer the hungry young family in the nest above her head. Nettie pauses in her work that she may not frighten the mother-bird away, and just at that moment the gate creaked upon its hinges.

Looking up, to her dismay, she sees a seedy individual coming toward her.

"Oh dear! A tramp! what shall I do?" thought frightened Nettie as all the dreadful newspaper stories of tramps rushed through her mind.

"Carlo has gone with father, and Bennie borrowed the gun only yesterday! How I wish father would come!"

The terrified girl was about to beat a hasty retreat, when the tramp stopped before her, cap in hand, and after bidding her a polite "Good morning," asked permission to get a drink of water at the pump close by.

While the man was quenching his thirst, Nettie took occasion to observe him more closely. "He doesn't look a dangerous man," she thought as she noted the dejected look upon his pale face. "Why, he has but one arm, poor fellow!" as she noticed for the first time the empty sleeve at his side.

The man, after having refreshed himself with copious draughts of the cool water, and bathed his face and head, came back to Nettie, saying: "Thank you Miss, it is very refreshing this hot morning," meaning the water.

Nettie smiled pleasantly, her fear all gone, and invited him to a seat in the shade, to rest himself before resuming his journey.

"How tired and hungry you look, poor man;" thought Nettie. Running into the kitchen, she soon re-appeared with a lunch, which she placed before the tramp inviting him to eat, in rather a bashful manner.

"Thank you! this is indeed acceptable as I have tasted no food to-day.

"Is it possible! Have you no money?" asked the wondering girl.

This was Nettie's first encounter with a specimen of the genus tramp, or she might not have been so ready to believe his story.

"No, Miss, and I will starve rather than beg," he exclaimed prondly.

"How long have you been—been—like this?" faltered Nettie, not quite knowing what to say.

"A tramp do you mean, Miss?" asked he, flushing at the word.

"Ever since I left the hospital," pointing to his empty sleeve.

"How did you loose it?" asked she, her eyes wide with pity.

"Coupling cars, Miss," was the short reply.

"I thought the railroad companies provided for employes who were crippled in their service, or at least paid them damages," said Nettie.

"It is so in some cases, but as I was only taking a sick friend's place, for a few days, that he might not lose his position, they did not consider me an employe, and said I must look to him for damages."

"Could he do nothing for you?"

The poor boy died while I was in the hospital, so I not only found myself without an arm, but deprived of a friend also."

"Could you not obtain employment, and have you no relatives?"

"No one wants to employ a cripple, and all my near relatives are dead," answered he bitterly.

Nettie after a thoughtful pause exclaimed:

"I am sure if General Superintendent Ames heard your story he would aid you. I have often heard of his generosity to his employes. Why do you not go to him?"

"B—— is a long way off, and with no money it is quite an undertaking to go there."

"Can you not find work on the way?" persisted Nettie.

"But few will hire a common tramp, Miss," the old, hard look coming back to his face.

"Would this help you?" asked Nettie, taking as mall purse from her pocket and emptying it of its sole contents, a shining gold coin.

"I am not a beggar, Miss," drawing himself up proudly. Then, seeing the hurt, disappointed look on the sensitive face, he added in a gentler tone, "I can't take your money, child, but will never forget your kindness."

"Do please take it and try to get employment; tramping is so dreadful!" cried the warm hearted Nettie, her eyes full of tears.

He hesitated, then a sudden look of determination came into his face, and he took the proffered money. "Since you have such confidence in me you shall not be disappointed; you shall have your gold piece back, with interest, some day, little one.

Nettie descried a cloud of dust in the distance, and presently old Dobbin, and the buckboard came in view. "Hurry away for father is coming, and he does not approve of giving money to tramps; he says they drink up everything they can get, and are thieves into the bargain;" seeing the blood mount to his brow at these words, she hesitated to say, "I am sure you do not"—she hesitated; he answered, interpreting her silence: "No, I have not fallen as low as that, but God knows what I might have been tempted to do, but for you, child!"

"Take this path across the orchard, so you may not meet them!" cried she hurriedly as old Dobbin came nearer and nearer.

"Your name first! I must know that in order to send you the money," he said smilingly.

"Nettie Severson is my name, and now please go.

"Good-bye and God bless you, child!" he exclaimed, in a faltering voice, as he took a last look at the excited girl.

Could Nettie's blue eyes full of tears have penetrated the thick foliage of the orchard, they would have seen the tramp throw himself down at the foot of a tree, face downward, and sob like a child. At length he rose, took a last look at the old house just visible among the trees, then pulling his cap over his eyes, he once more took his weary way onward.

He carried, in his heart, for many a day the image of a fair young face, framed in by drooping vines; the sunshine glittering through them upon the golden hair, and the blue eyes full of tears.

Mrs. Severson expressed surprise that Nettie had not performed her usual tasks. Glancing at her flushed cheeks and quivering lips, she inquired if she were ill. Nettie answered that it was only a headache, and the next moment burst into tears. Her mother was much alarmed, for she had never seen her daughter in such a state of nervous excitement.

Nettie dried her eyes soon, however, and went on with her preparations for dinner. During the meal her mother related how Bivin's store at the "Corners" had been broken into the night before, and several hundred dollars stolen. It was supposed to be the work of tramps, as one had been seen lurking about the day before.

Nettie trembled and grew pale at this, but as no one mentioned seeing a one-armed tramp, she resolved to keep her own counsel.

It was the first time in the sixteen years of her life she had kept a secret from her mother, and it weighed heavily on her conscience. She at times questioned the wisdom of giving her gold piece to a tramp, for gold pieces did not grow plentifully on the Severson bush. At such times the memory of those fine dark eyes lighting up with a sudden resolve to be worthy of her confidence, always came to her, and she heard again that fervent, "God bless you, child," spoken in a broken voice.

The coin in question had been her one treasure, the product of the sale of her only pet—Brindle's red calf, which she had fed with her own hands, and loved with all her innocent heart. The gold piece had seemed small recompense for the loss of the pretty creature, for which she mourned deeply, and would not be comforted.

She became more reconciled, however, when her mother remarked, casually that $5 would buy a "dress pattern" of a certain piece of pale blue cashmere which Nettie had long admired.

She planned the purchase of it, with a thrill of girlish pride at the thought, that this particular shade of blue—"morning glory blue," she called it—was just suited to her complexion; and would be very becoming.

Nettie was no heroine, after all, for she regretted having given the price of the blue dress to a tramp, at times excedingly; better feelings triumphed, however, and when her mother hinted that she might invest her money in that particular piece of dress goods, she replied that there were other things worth having besides cashmere dresses. "Two arms for instance," as she laughingly threw both hers round her mother's neck.

Five years passed away, and the episode of the tramp was nearly forgotten, or only remembered as a piece of childish folly, to be ashamed of in the light of worldly wisdom.

The five years had nearly all been spent by Nettie at the Seminary, from which she graduated with high honors. In appearance she is little changed; a few additional inches in the length of her skirts, and a chignon in place of the loose curls, are the most notable. Her manner is more self-possessed, and dignified perhaps, but she is the same warm-hearted girl as of old, unspoiled, helpful, and happy.

Again she is sitting in the porch beneath the vines, and again she looks up as the gate creaks, to behold a stranger standing there as though uncertain of the place.

"This must be the place!" soliloquized the man aloud, "'Two elms at the gate, and morning glories over the porch' was what the boss said, and this must be right!

"Is this where Miss Nettie Severson lives, Miss?" he asked, respectfully.

"My name is Nettie Severson, and this is my home;" she answered, pleasantly.

"Here is a note for you, and I am to wait for an answer."

Nettie pointed to a seat, and opening the note, read:

Miss Nettie Severson.

DEAR MADAM:—The writer desires an interview with you and your permission will call upon you at 7 o'clock this evening.

Yours respectfully,
EDWARD LEYDEN.

To which Nettie replied:

Mr. Edward Leyden.

DEAR SIR:—I shall be at home this evening, and will receive you. NETTIE SEVERSON.

Although Nettie did not recall the name, she decided it must be some one whom she had met among her school friends and forgotten.

She grew more anxious as to who her guest might be, as the time drew near for his arrival, growing so impatient at last that she could not remain quietly indoors.

Strolling out upon the porch she seated herself just inside the vine-covered arch, and fell into a reverie from which she was aroused by the sight of a man standing, with bared head, before her.

Startled, she gazed at him for an instant, then "My tramp!" broke involuntarily from her lips.

"A tramp no longer, thanks to you," replied the man, gazing at her with deep emotion. "Please do not go in! Let me tell the sequel to my story here in the same place I occupied so long ago," seating himself on the sofa at her feet.

After a moment's silence he began: "I followed your advice and sought the General Superintendent of the B. & A. road, and told him my story, and also of your kindness to me and your confidence in his generosity. He listened patiently and at the end said: 'The little girl shall not be disappointed."

"Writing a few lines, he sent a messenger with the note, and bade me wait a few moments. Presently a gentleman appeared whom he introduced as the Chief Engineer of the B. & A. road. He made me repeat my story. When I had finished he asked mewhat position I could fill; if I would like to go out with a surveying party who were to start next day, adding, 'It is rough work, but the only thing that presents itself just now.'"

"I replied that I should only be too glad of any employment by which I could gain a livelihood. I was with the surveyors two years, adding to my slight knowledge of engineering until I was able to take charge of the survey for a new branch.

I was so successful that I was promoted, and last spring was appointed Chief Engineer of the Western department. I am looking over a sort of new road in this valley, which accounts for my presence here. All this I owe to you; your words set me to thinking, and I thought there was still something to live for."

"I have come to pay my debt, Miss Nettie! Here is the identical coin you gave to the tramp, five years ago; here also is the interest, computed from that day to this. The debt of gratitude can never be repaid!"

Nettie listened, amazed at the result of her deed of kindness, but refused the proffered money, saying, "Do not spoil my satisfaction in the one act of disinterested kindness I have done in my life." In vain he urged, she firmly refused to touch a penny of the money.

"You can do me a favor, however! Come and be presented to my parents, and relate to them the story. It is my one secret from them, and has lain heavy on my conscience all these years," she said smiling. "Besides, I would like the mystery of why I did not buy the blue cashmere cleared up," and she led the way to the sitting-room.

Mr. and Mr. Severson, though somewhat surprised at the appearance of a stranger, welcomed him cordially, supposing him to be a school friend of Nettie's.

Nettie asked him to relate to her father how she came to disobey his wishes, and give money to a tramp.

So well did Leyden relate the story, that the old man's eyes were full of tears at the close, and he forgave Nettie her deception.

The evening passed pleasantly, and both Mr. and Mrs. Severson gave Edward a cordial invitation to call again. He was not slow to avail himself of the privilege, and became a frequent visitor, and a prime favorite with the old people. Nettie was kind and cordial at first, but grew shy and silent in his presence after a few visits.

One evening, finding her alone on the vine-covered porch, he told her that he had lost his heart to her that day so long ago, when her eyes were full of tears of sympathy for the poor tramp. That the memory of her sweet face had kept him from the down hill road which, in his desperation, he was nearly entering, and asked her to accept him in part payment of the debt he owed her.

Nettie shyly answered that her father must be consulted in all her future business transactions. Evidently he must have agreed to the proposed arrangement, for a wedding followed soon. The bride wore a dress of pale blue, and the ceremony was performed under an arch of morning glories.

The wife thinks, as she looks in the eyes of her handsome husband, that her money was well invested, even though she did not buy the blue cashmere.

Among the bridal gifts is one she prizes more than all, a slender chain from which depends a gold piece, marked: "To Nettie—from her tramp."

Only a Sad Accident.

Western judge—You are charged, sir, with being the leader of a party which hunted down and lynched a horse thief. The days have gone by when citizens of this great commonwealth can thus take the law into their own hands! hence your arrest. What have you to say?

Prominent citizen—I ain't guilty, judge. I'll tell you how it was. We caught the feller, and tied his hands and feet. Nothing wrong about that, was there, judge?

"No, that was no doubt necessary."

"Wall, judge, there was a storm comin' up and we couldn't spare him an umbrella very well, so we stood him under a tree. That was all right, wasn't it?"

"Certainly."

"Wall, the clouds kept gatherin' an' the wind was purty high, an' we didn't want him blown away, so we tied a rope around his neck and fastened the other end to a limb above—not tight, jedge, jest so as to hold him—and we left him standin' solid on his feet. Nothin' wrong about that, was there?"

"Nothing at all."

"Then I kin be excused, can't I?"

"But the man was found suspended from that tree and stone dead the next morning."

"None of us had anything to do with that, jedge. You see we left him standin' there in good health and spirits, for we give him all he could drink when we said 'good-by;' but you see during the night the rain come up an' I s'pose the rope got purty wet and shrunk a couple o' feet. That's how the sad accident happened, jedge."—*New York Weekly.*

A Miracle Explained.

Mrs. D.—My husband fell down the cellar stairs with five bottles of wine and didn't break a single one of them.

Visitor—Wonderful! Miraculous!

"Well, no; it's not so wonderful after all. The five bottles of wine were on the inside. He drank them before he fell down the stairs."

Kindly Leniency.

It was a certain bishop, who, before his elevation to the Episcopate, was master of one of the colleges of Cambridge University, of whom Bishop Wilberforce once said, "You have heard of the milk of human kindness, but unless you know the bishop of C——, you do not know the old cow from which the milk comes." He was indulgent to every one, even beyond the verge of laxity, and his gentleness can hardly have been salutary for youthful morals.

One day he put one of his boys in a corner, and though this was such a mild form of penalty, he could not stand to compel the youth to endure it for any great length of time.

"You may come out of the corner now, Dicky," he called, after a short interval.

"Sha'n't," replied Dicky.

"Oh, do come out, Dicky!"

"Sha'n't, I tell you."

"I'll give you a shilling if you'll come out."

"I sha'n't come out for a shilling."

"I'll make it 18 pence." And for 18 pence Dicky consented to appear. Naturally parental discipline did not gain by that incident.

The bishop was the pink of courtesy, and if he went to officiate at the church, made a point of shaking hands with the warden, taking off his hat to the pew-opener, and according every official some kindly recognition. One day, as he was stepping into his carriage after service, he stopped and said to the rector:

"I have quite forgotten the nice, pleasant, honest man, your sexton, who was so attentive. I must just go back and shake hands with him."

"I am sorry to say, my lord," returned the rector, "that he is not at all deserving of your kind condescension."

"Indeed," said the bishop, "nothing serious, I hope."

"Only this, my lord. The man is continually drunk, and I am obliged now to be on the lookout for a new sexton."

"Oh, I must just run in and shake hands with him," persisted the bishop, continuing, as he resumed his seat in the carriage, "I am very glad that there's nothing serious against the poor fellow!"

So kindly was this dear old gentleman that he was willing to believe all the failings of humanity "leaned to virtue's side," and though he was far from excusing evil, never regarded the hopeless sinner with pharisaical intolerance. Thus did he become an example to both saint and sinner; to the one by his charity, and to the other by the uprightness of his daily life.

An Unmistakable Sign.

Jones (to manager of the fur store)—Now, Mr. Hyde, in all probability my wife will come down here this morning to pick out a new seal sacque. Some time since, you will remember, she and I were in here and I rather discouraged her, when she sung the sealskin sacque song.

Hyde—Yes, Mr. Jones, I remember the time well.

Jones—Yes? Well, I have had occasion to change my mind, and when she comes, please see that she is shown a good article.

Hyde—Very well, Mr. Jones.

Jones—And by the way. She might wish to look at a fur hat or muff.

Hyde—Pardon me, Mr. Jones, but would you feel offended were I to ask you a rather impertinent question?

Jones—Fire away, old man, you can't hurt my feelings.

Hyde—Then, I would like to ask if your wife's mother is not paying you a visit.

Jones—Well, I should mildly ejaculate! I've had just a week of mother-in-law and I'm about dead, but how the devil do you know?

Hyde—The symptons are always the same. I've been there myself and can sympathize with you.—*Peck's Sun.*

To Do Away with Mourning.

Just now a number of English women of high social standing are attempting to inaugurate the fashion of doing away with the heavy mourning that it has long been customary for women to wear when a near relative dies. This rushing into crape and bombazine is exceedingly expensive, but aside from expense, the wearing of heavy English crape cannot be too strongly condemned, for it contains chemicals that often seriously affect the health; and there are instances where a crape veil worn over the face has produced alarming cases of cutaneous disease.

An Awful Time with an Oyster.

Last night a fat man wearing a low-necked shirt with a turn-down collar three sizes too large for him, sat down to a table in a Clark street restaurant and called for a plate of raw oysters. He got them cold and juicy right off the ice, and harpooning a fat one with his fork, he lifted it toward his mouth. But the slippery, slimy, chilly bivalve dropped off his fork before reaching its destination, carromed on the fat man's chin and then slid down on the inside of his shirt and nestled on his breast.

No one saw the incident. The obese gent himself didn't see it, but he felt that something had happened, and that he had arrived at a crisis in his life. A pained, startled expression rested for a moment on his face; then with a low, plaintive wail of heartbreaking agony he rose from his chair and clapped his hand on his stomach. He struck the oyster, but that coy creature was one of the most alert and agile of its species. It at once changed its base on feeling the presure and slid upward and across the fat man's wide expanse of palpitating bosom, leaving a trail of Arctic frigidity in its wake, and took up new quarters in his left arm-pit.

With a wild howl of anguish the unhappy proprietor of the oyster leaped two feet in the air, uttered another yell like a wild-west Indian, and commenced to work his arm after the manner of a bagpipe musician. The oyster got excited and again started on its travels, but was apparently unable to select a permanent location. After making several blind rushes it halted for a moment under a short rib near the spine to catch its second wind.

The unfortunate fat man was in a state of mind bordering on insanity. He kicked over his chair, yelled, and swore, grabbed himself in front and behind, and on both sides, rolled up his eyes, frothed at the mouth, and spun around like a top. But the slippery bivalve was now thoroughly rattled and scooted here and there like a streak of greased lightning, taking great pains not to travel over the same ground twice.

"He's got a fit!" screamed a wild-eyed man, making a rush for the door with a napkin tucked under his chin.

"It's either that or he's afire inside of his clothes," said another pale-faced diner, edging away from the sufferer.

"For mercy's sake take him off, somebody; I'm dying!" wailed the stricken man as he threw up both hands and sat down heavily upon the floor.

When the victim of misplaced refreshments struck the floor the oyster shot out of the back of his neck like a bullet, hit the ceiling with a squashy plunk and then fell back and hung limp and lifeless from the chandelier.

The fat man's physician says the patient will recover from his attack of nervous prostration in a few days.—*Chicago Times.*

The Shy Man.

No man can be diverted so successfully, writes "Clara Belle," as by being allowed to talk up his pet subject to some one who is curious and ignorant. It is a good rule to keep as silent as possible till you get a hint at the mental tendencies of the man in your company. Shy men need only to fancy they are not going to be required to talk or be brilliant, and their tongues promptly loosen. A word about the weariness of society, the shallowness of society men, the relief that a little quiet is, sets him going. All you need to do then is to keep your eyes earnestly attentive. It isn't even necessary to comprehend what he is saying.

The man who is always inclined to be complimentary and flirtatious is rather more difficult. He won't be entertained unless he has an opportunity to display his pet accomplishments and a flirtation needs two clever persons. Even Mr. Frivolity, however, will talk by the hour of his last conquest, and how he did it; so you may escape being made the object of his next.

Let the silent man be silent. If you can accomplish this without letting him feel you are expecting him to talk, you will entertain him completely. Never appear to exert yourself. Have a big cargo of silent interest on hand. Be adroit at gathering up the opinions a man lets fall, and returning them to him in your own words. Nothing original will please him half so well. Be ignorant on the subject he likes to expound, and never permit yourself to be bored.

A GRATE fire warms up when it's coaled.